

Remarks
Transportation Committee
PUBLIC HEARING
Monday, March 4, 2013 6:30 PM
Wilbur Cross High School (New Haven, CT)

My name is **Murray Harrison** and I am a leader / representative of **Shalom, UCC** (New Haven) and **CONECT** (*Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut*) – an interfaith consortium of congregations based in Bridgeport and New Haven (of which Shalom, UCC is a member.)

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to share with you our strong support for this important proposed legislation (**SB 68, SB 628, and HB 6037.**) As you are well aware, Connecticut law presently conditions eligibility for a driver's license on federal immigration status. This prevents **54,000 Connecticut immigrants** from obtaining licenses—even though they need to drive to support their families and to do all the basic things in life, like taking their kids to school or going to the grocery store. The present law **does not prevent undocumented immigrants from driving** – it just means that they **drive without licenses**, as well as without training, testing, insurance, or registration, with the consequent result that our roads are less safe for everyone.

Because of our broad concern for the public welfare, we would respectfully point out that not only does this untenable situation make it difficult for police to identify drivers, insurance costs are consequently increased for presently insured drivers by an estimated **\$20M** annually! Nationwide, unlicensed motorists are five times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash than licensed drivers! Providing a way for Connecticut immigrant motorists to obey driver's license laws will make everyone on our state's roads safer; these immigrant drivers will need to be tested on their driving skills and knowledge of the rules of the road, as well as be required to purchase insurance.

This is also a **revenue** issue -- if undocumented immigrant drivers are able to get licenses and register their cars, the State will earn **two million dollars** in revenue per year from new registrations! **Illinois, New Mexico, Utah, and Washington** already require all immigrant motorists to get driver's licenses and have implemented strong procedures to verify identity and residence documents.

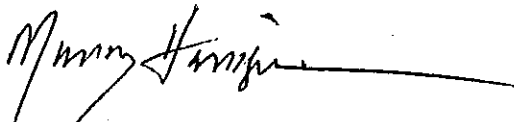
Since New Mexico made this change in 2003, its rate of uninsured motorists fell from **33% to under 9%**. New Mexico also saw a **32% decrease in alcohol-related crashes** and a 23% drop in traffic fatalities. The Illinois legislature recently passed this legislation with bi-partisan support and Gov. Quinn signed it into law on Sunday, January 27, 2013.

In summary, all of Connecticut will greatly benefit when all of its motorists get licensed (!):

- Police will be able to identify motorists during stops and check their traffic records.
- Witnesses to crimes will be more comfortable reporting crimes to the police and cooperating in investigations once they have identification.
- Drivers will be more likely to stay at the scene of an accident to aid police and emergency workers and exchange insurance information with other motorists.
- Limited court time and jail space will not be wasted on drivers who are there solely for driving without a license or insurance.
- Insurance rates will fall for everyone. Connecticut policy holders will save \$20 million each year.
- The State will earn two million dollars in revenue per year from new registrations. • Immigrants who can drive legally will be more likely to work, spend, and contribute to our economy.

We understand that a broad spectrum of law enforcement, business, labor, faith, and community leaders also support this initiative.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Murray Harrison', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Murray Harrison
CONNECT